



ANTENATAL
& NEONATAL
GUIDELINES,
EDUCATION
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LEARNING
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ANGELS is a
joint program of the
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and the
Arkansas Department of
Health and Human Services
with the support of
the Arkansas Medical Society.

UAMS
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



7 DHHS
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

June 2, 2009

Acting Chairman Michael Copps
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 09-51

Dear FCC Acting Chairman and Commissioners:

This letter responds to the FCC's April 8 request for comments regarding the development of a National Broadband Plan (FCC 09-31). Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences recognizes the National Broadband Plan is critical to addressing the issues of access, affordability, and innovation.

At the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), we deliver our mission "*to teach, to heal, to search, to serve*" among patients representing a diversity of racial, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds. Our everyday interactions offer us a unique perspective on the most important considerations in developing the FCC's National Broadband Plan.

First, FCC support must ensure broadband access is available to 100% of Arkansas' population, not only including our patients, employees, doctors, nurses, and staff but also those served by other hospitals and clinics across our state. Increased broadband access will enable Arkansas' population to retrieve valuable medical information and use revolutionary telemedicine applications, such as the remote monitoring of diabetes and heart disease.

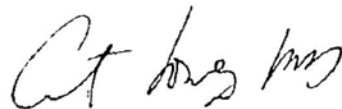
Secondly, broadband access must be affordable. For many small hospitals, clinics, and their patients, affordability is a significant barrier to their adoption of broadband service and are thus excluded from reaping the benefits of advanced telemedicine applications designed to cost-effectively improve access to specialty care and improve outcomes. The recurring monthly service charge is not the only affordability barrier, but significant limitations are seen in the one-time, initial cost of acquiring equipment necessary to participate in telemedicine services. UAMS urges the FCC to consider these limitations, especially in small hospitals and clinics found throughout rural areas, as the cost of line charges and one-time purchases of equipment limit many end users who could possibly benefit from broadband-driven telemedicine services the most.

Lastly and most important to us as recipients of FCC Rural Health Care Pilot award funding, the FCC must include provisions in the National Broadband Plan that do not stifle the technological innovation that has led to the development and implementation of life-saving telemedicine applications that improve the quality of life of patients with broadband access.

To end this discussion, we wish to illustrate an example of how innovative telemedicine applications delivered via broadband access has improved quality of life in Arkansas. Antenatal & Neonatal Guidelines, Education and Learning System (ANGELS) provides obstetrical and neonatal care to women in rural Arkansas through interactive compressed video delivered via broadband access. This technology, along with weekly telemedicine conferences, empowers remote physicians to confer with the university's maternal-fetal medicine specialists in real-time regarding individual high-risk cases. To aid this interaction, ANGELS' specialists use telemedicine to read ultrasounds in real-time, enabling remote patients and their providers to receive on-the-spot consultation and advice. Innovation delivered via broadband access has allowed UAMS to bring subspecialty support directly to Arkansas' hometowns to the benefit of expectant mothers and their babies. ANGELS stands as a model telemedicine program that has been replicated across the United States, with more programs steadily adopting this innovative model that depends on broadband access. With the growing achievements of ANGELS, UAMS continues to build its efforts in employing broadband to improve healthcare for Arkansas' rural populations, with blossoming telemedicine programs in emergency room triage, neurology, pediatrics, mental health, and geriatrics. Increased access to broadband and accompanying support for line charges, needed equipment, and innovation all play an essential role in improving the health of Arkansans.

With our greatest sincerity, UAMS hopes the FCC successfully assembles its National Broadband Plan so broadband is 100% accessible, affordable, and provides the innovation necessary to continuously improve the quality of life of every American. We, as healthcare providers, Arkansans, and Americans, depend on it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis L. Lowery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Curtis" being more prominent and the last name "Lowery" following in a similar style.

Curtis L. Lowery, M.D.
Director, Center for Distance Health
Director, Antenatal & Neonatal Guidelines, Education and Learning System
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences